

Mr. Chairman, Senator's my name is Travis Hoffman and I lived in Missoula, Montana. I am happy to be here today to talk to you about SB 394. I wear two hats today, one is as a person who lives with a disability in the state of Montana and second, as an employee of Summit Independent Living Center where we strive to work with people with disabilities in the achieving and maintaining their independence in their own homes in their own communities.

To this day and age it is unfortunate that the only type of long-term care that is guaranteed by the federal government is institutionalized care. Fortunately for the citizens of this state you all have lent a hand in contributing to the strong community-based services and supports that allows many Montanans with disabilities to live, and receive long-term care services, in their communities and for that I thank you. However, the fact remains that Montana still spends 71.3% of its long-term care dollars on institutionalized care (This data is from the CMS 64, Office of State Agency Financial Management, as collected and published by Medstat on July 7, 2006).

The Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, in October of last year, put out an RFP for states to apply for federal grant money to enable states to develop a true money follows the person (from the institution to the community) model. Montana did submit a letter of intent to apply for this grant but unfortunately did not follow through on that letter. So now you have this bill before you. This bill does have the best of intentions, and ones that I truly believe in, but I would like to see a few amendments to the bill. Right now it only applies to persons who have a developmental disability or a mental illness, and while this may be a good place to start considering the high rate of institutionalization among people with those types of disabilities, to be a true money follows the person model it should apply to all people regardless of what type of disability they have or for whatever reason they have a need for long-term care services. It has long been proven that providing long-term care services in the community is far cheaper, and more dignifying than providing, or forcing people to receive their long-term care services in an institutionalized setting. This bill does not asked for any money nor does it require the state to provide services in the community if those services do end up being more expensive. It simply asks the state to use the same money that is already being spent for somebody receiving services in an institution to allow that person to receive those services in a community setting, close to family and friends and a more supportive environment.

I have heard that the Senior and Long-Term Care Division would be opposing this bill and while I do not know the basis for their opposing this bill, I would just like to say that the state offered its pledge to deinstitutionalization I believe back in the 1980s, yet here we are in 2006 and buildings at the institution in Boulder have been renovated and new buildings proposed for what, to institutionalize more people? To not support the philosophy of this bill would be a big step backwards for this state, especially on its commitment to deinstitutionalization and its duty, under the ADA and Olmstead decision, to providing services in the least restrictive settings.

I thank you all for your time and I believe that with a few amendments to this bill it can truly make a difference in the lives of thousands of Montana's citizens.

Travis Hoffman  
Advocacy Specialist  
Summit Independent Living Center  
700 Southwest Higgins, Suite 101  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-728-1630  
[thoffman@summitilc.org](mailto:thoffman@summitilc.org)